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Solidarietà con TIMOR EST

Coordinamento italiano dei gruppi di solidarietà con il popolo timorese

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INITIATIVES OF "COORDINAMENTO ITALIANO DEI GRUPPI DI SOLIDARIETA' CON TIMOR EST"

In Italy, the first initiative in favour of East Timor has been a fasting-day organized by " Comitato di Ferrara per la pace" (engaged on peace, disarmament and solidarity issues), in 1986.

In 1989 the Ferrara Committee created, together with "Servizio Civile Internazionale" (a voluntary work association active in 70 Countries, involved in peace, solidarity, emargination, ecology activities) the Italian Coordination.

Since then, solidarity tours for East Timor - joined by volunteers coming from all over the world - have been organized every year.

"Timor tours" have touched 35 towns from North to South Italy, with the result to involve participants on East Timor issue and to make grass roots groups and local institutions aware of Timorese people situation.

Many Local Bodies have subscribed appeals and solidarity documents to national and international institutions.

In 1991 and 1992 S.C.I. volunteers performed open-air theatre actions on the streets, using body language as a way to communicate the everyday tragedy of East Timor.

In 1994 meetings in schools and a public debate have been organized; young participants to the East Timor study camp have realized a booklet about the crocodile legend, to be spread out in schools.

TIMOR EST , ex colonia portoghese nell'arcipelago della Sonda, è stato occupato nel 1975 dall'esercito indonesiano. Da allora è teatro di un genocidio che sta portando all'estinzione il popolo timorese. Il coordinamento italiano dei gruppi di solidarietà con il popolo di TIMOR EST è nato nel 1991.

Contributes to the debate have been the participation of Bruno Pistocchi, who lived in East Timor for some years before the invasion (he wrote a book about Christian presence and traditions in the island) and of Joel Saracho, representative of "Initiatives for International Dialogue" and author of the video on Manila Conference.

East Timor camps and other solidarity activities of the Italian Coordination are directed to the targets 1.Institutions (Local and National); 2.Mass media; 3.Grass root groups and NGO; Civil Society groups.

1.INSTITUTIONS

Besides local institutions (Local Councils) some Italian Members of Parliament have appealed for investigation and clarification by Italian and European Parliaments, along these years.

In particular, resolutions have been presented in 1990 (ACP-EEC Joint Assembly); in 1991 (Deputies Chamber); in 1992 (Foreign Affairs Minister; Council President); 1993 (Foreign Affairs Minister).
Mainly Left and Green Parties have been involved in East Timor issue.

After a recent meeting in Bologna, other MP promised to present another appeal to the Italian Government for East Timor.

On 13th July 1994, the Italian Coordination presented, with other solidarity groups and NGO, a petition to the United Nations- Special Committe on Decolonization , with the request, also on the basis of the General Assembly resolution 37/30, to promote and guarantee the right of the East Timor people to self determination.

2.MASS MEDIA

In Italy, newspapers mentioned East Timor only on occasion of Pope visit to Dili and of Santa Cruz massacre.

On both occasions, Italian groups of solidarity were required by some journalists to provide more detailed information, becouse of lack of a specific file on the issue.

Along these years links have been settled with the daily newspaper "Il Manifesto", with the weekly "Avvenimenti", with the monthly "Geos", "Seanzaconfine" and "Pogrom".
"Guerre e pace", a monthly review of the pacifist Italian movement, has a column under the care of the Italian Coordination, concerning East Timor issue.

Booklets and sheets on East Timor have been produced by "Centro Informazione Educazione allo Sviluppo", "Comitato di Ferrara per la pace", "DISVI", "Servizio Civile Internazionale".

Local newspapers published articles about East Timor on occasion of specific initiatives.

Trasmissions.on East Timor have been broadcasted on the National Television (RAI 3), National Radio (Radio 3) and Radio Radicale.

3.GRASS ROOT GROUPS AND NGOs

Many initiatives have been organized in these years to inform and raise awareness on people. In particular, on occasion of invasion anniversary, fasting days, meetings, sit in (in front of the Indonesian Ambassade) have been organized.
Initiatives have been organized in more than 50 towns; grass roots groups, engaged in solidarity actions, have been involved.

Three NGOs ("Servizio Civile Internazionale", "Disarmo Sviluppo", Centro Informazione Educazione allo Sviluppo") are members of the Coordination Body; "Centro Volontari Marchigiani", "Mani Tese '76","Associazione per i popoli minacciati", "Movimento Cristiano per la pace" cooperate with it.

The Coordinating Body keeps in touch too with the group of solidarity for Sahrawi people and "Gesellschaft fur bedrohte Volker" South Tirol section, with whom we are preaparing an appeal to present the next ASEAN-CEE meeting, asking for MP to support the proposal of arms embargo to Indonesia.

PROPOSALS OF THE COORDINATION BODY

During last meeting of the "Cooordinamento per Timor Est" (3 July) we planned

1. to launch a campaign for "distance - adoptions" of Timorese children (through local Christian Church);

2. to organize meetings with MP sensitive to East Timor issue;

3. to collect stuff for the realization of a volume on East Timor history and culture.